

**The Uncorked Conversation Podcast with Allyson Scammell**  
**Episode #2: The Game Changing Power of the “YES, AND...” Mindset**

**Transcripts**

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Listening to the Uncorked Conversation with Allyson Scammell episode number two. Hello and welcome to the uncork conversation, a podcast for purpose driven passion filled women entrepreneurs who want to uncork the big magic in their life and business without burning out.

We'll get to the truth. Of how to uncork our core gifts, the ones we keep hidden inside, and how to infuse those gifts into our personal and professional life in a way that feels like magic.

We'll also uncover how to truly experience the joy of the journey through smart time management and planning. I'm your host Alison Scammell. Let's uncork.

Hello my friends. I can't tell you how excited I am for this episode. I've spent years dreaming about starting a podcast and I've known for some time who the perfect first guest would be.

Kelly got this is an improvisational actor. She is the founder of improv bubble a school of improvisational theater catering directly to the Brussels international community. Kelly is also one half of internationally acclaimed literary narrative duo. The bookends.

She performs directs and teaches improvisation in both Brussels and abroad. Kelly is passionate about using improvisation as a tool to foster greater self-awareness confidence collaboration communication and leadership qualities in individuals and teams.

Kelly welcome my dear. How are you.

I'm very well thank you for the lovely introduction. Alison I didn't know that I was going to be your first guest. But you knew it. That's amazing.

Yes I have known for some time that should you agree I wanted you on first.

Well it's it's a tremendous honor and I'm very happy to be here.

Awesome thank you. I should also mention that I'm one of Kelly's improv students and she is an amazing teacher and her classes are above all else. So much fun for me too.

It's so much fun for me too. It's great just is fun.

Can you tell us what improv is and what is it about it that drew you towards it.

Sure improvisational theater is basically theater without a script. Everyone on stage all the players are creating the story as they go along based on their suggestions that the audience gives them. And on that getting inspired by each other. So they're basically the writers of the actors and the directors at the same time all creating what you see on stage. And what drew me to improvisation.

I had a background in theater I did a lot of theater at university. I was at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival which is a very large theatre festival in the UK. And a friend from university who was in an improv troop told me to come to see his show.

I had never heard the word improv before but it sounded interesting. So I went along and I started seeing this magic happen on stage people with no script just getting up and riffing off what the audience was giving them and all of each other. And it was this jaw dropping moment because I didn't even know it was possible.

I've never seen something like that before. But everything I saw after that was improvised because I just instantly fell in love with the medium and eventually when I when I came across a workshop I decided that I would go for it because it just seemed to be so far outside my comfort zone. But it was undoubtedly going to be good for me. And then the rest is history. I love that.

The unscripted nature of improv is so cool and we have been talking Kelly and I've been talking for some time about how personal development and improv acting overlap. And you when I knew I wanted to invite Kelly on to talk about this but I wasn't really sure what angle I wanted to take because there's so much that you know there's so many different things we could focus on.

Then I took her class and she let me into a level two class even I didn't take Level One nicely she mentioned to the class and you breezed through it. And she mentioned to the class remember the rule of thumb of improvisational acting. Yes. And I was like What. My ears perked up because yes. And is a motto that I have adopted for my life.

So can you tell us in the improv world what yes and means and is not exactly a rule but it's more of a guiding principle. It's something to remember for improvisers so that they're in a state of acceptance rather than denial because when you're onstage creating something out of nothing and all you have are your other players if you don't take what's already there and what they're giving you then you're going to be you're going to have nothing onstage except two people arguing basically yes.

And it's a nice reminder of that openness and to give you an example if I were to say to you put your hands up and you're under arrest add that you negate Me My Reality I'm trying to create which is that I'm a police woman who's about to arrest you then you're not playing along if you do put your hands up or you try and flee then you are accepting the reality that I've decided to create and and you're going along with it you're playing along with it so that's you saying yes to me to the scene

I've created where the end comes in is what you do what you add onto that because if we just accept we're not creating a story. But if I see an idea and you accept this idea and you add your own idea and then I accept that idea and I add my own idea we're slowly creating a whole story together. That story also is so much richer than something that would have come just out of my head or just out of your head or just out of someone else's head. So yes and this is this wonderful principle to facilitate co creation onstage.

So then what happens when you throw something out there and someone says no or yes but saying no.

It basically gets you nowhere because you're basically like telling your partner I don't like that that idea is not good enough for me. What it might be though is also fear because very often it's very hard for us to accept a change because in life we've got to go around life with our defenses on high. And I think that the way I sort of say this to my students sometimes it's like we have a caveman inside us a caveman who's learned how to survive and learn to look out for danger.

And so we have to have our defenses high in life in order to survive but it doesn't serve us well in improv because in improv if we're closed off and we're not open to receiving ideas or suggestions we're not going to be able to connect with our partners and we're not going to be able to create something with our partners.

So the idea of yes and is to kind of bypass that initial reaction we might have which is to say no out of fear or out of judgment and to have a positive attitude a constructive attitude to whatever comes our way. And I think that the suspension of judgment is an important thing too because when we say no or when we say yes but which guest but is essentially a no because the minute you say but you've just negated.

Yes it means that we are taking in what is being said with an open that with an open mind in life. We see that too sometimes we're really quick to shoot down other people's ideas just out of almost an automatic reaction.

Not really because we want to but because that's the way we're wired. So if we try and have a more accepting attitude a more constructive attitude we might find that actually wasn't such a bad idea after all. And if others do that to us too we might feel more inclined to suggest something or suggest more things because the minute you get to know you also shrink a little bit. You feel like you've been shot down.

And that's also not helpful in life or on stage because if you make a suggestion then your partner immediately rejects it. Then how confident will you feel to get up again and try again.

Absolutely. A man I love this motto. Yes. And for improv and life and I'm such a novice prompt student. But in the few classes I've taken for Kelly I just see how important this concept is. If you aren't in sync with your partner and accepting what they're offering I just it was quite clear to me that the scene really fast or the scene doesn't really go anywhere.

It falls flat just as Kelly said the energy deflates as well because the set of the psychology of the players goes down. They're there they're not in a they're not in a happy accepting mood. Everyone gets a bit frustrated.

Absolutely. When you say yes and you are seeing all the solutions all the possibility everything that is available to you.

As Kelly said you go into a state of acceptance so often and I see it all the time with my clients. We view the world as black and white. It's either or people who have side hustles. I want to pursue my passion project but I have a day job.

Very true. Yeah yeah.

How can you say I want to pursue my passion side project and I have a day job. The two are not mutually exclusive you can do both. It's a way of opening up your mind to. And it's also a way to find the positive side of every situation.

Very true very very true.

So let me ask you Kelly how has the spirit of this phrase entered into other areas of your life.

Well building on exactly what you said I'm doing. Doing so much improv at the same time as having a job.

I used to think about it especially when I was a newer to to improvisation where I could already see the potential and I already started daydreaming a little bit about maybe doing this full time. It very much felt like a dream and an unachievable dream at that oh I would like to but I'm not good enough. I would like to but I have no time.

I would like to but I have no money. I would like to but this. That that. So even though I really wanted to do more and more and direct more improv start in pro level I would see everything around me as limitations rather than as this is a situation. How can I make this work for me. Also with with colleagues and friends.

So I used to be a lot quicker I think to judge and to shoot down ideas or to not be open to other people's ideas and the one I remember actually from other improviser. My friend Donna she said to me once when I had a problem with a colleague that works to me why don't you approach this as an improviser and instead of saying no say yes.

And I did that in that situation and then tried to make a mental note for myself to do that more in life generally and sort of take a moment take a little pause and when someone suggesting something instead of having that immediate gut reaction that we sometimes have which is this defense mechanism going up out of fear to try and you know just have those two three seconds to remember to be in an accepting mode and then see what happens.

Beautiful and I love what you're saying about yes but really does trigger this seeing everything around you has limitations. Exactly as you said this is like how many times believes.

Right. Right. How many times have you heard someone say I want to start exercising more I want to start drinking green juice I want to start you know pursuing my entrepreneurial passions but it just like but it's just like stop it's the roadblock.

Yeah exactly. It negates everything that comes before it and it really does and it's almost like you wave up the white flag and you've already admitted defeat before you've even tried.

Exactly. And I am driving my husband crazy these days with Yes and I don't say yes but anymore for anything you just say but because this is getting annoying and I'm like No I really can't because I've almost trained my brain to stop using the phrase and it really it might sound simple it might sound kind of how could it be that big of a deal but it really does change the way you think and it goes from seeing all your limitations to seeing all of your possibilities.

Yeah it's wonderful. It's also just getting rid of the fear because it's fear but is fear. No is fear. We regard ourselves because we're afraid. We don't guard ourselves because we're horrible human beings. We put our defenses up because we're scared. It's wonderful too. It's actually an act of courage and bravery to be open.

Absolutely. Talking about another person it's also helped you to just see their strengths not their weaknesses.

What makes you this is I mean this isn't another rule in inverted commas of improv is to make your partner look good and to trust and support your partner. And if you're already in this in a state of accepting what they're going to give you and the building on that you're much more likely to be in that state too which is that I'm going to try and make you look so good.

Everything you say to me is wonderful. It's gold it's great if you guys are giving it we're giving back to each other. That's the attitude you have when we're on stage with each other. The sky's the limit. It's just a wonderful wonderful feeling because you feel the support you feel the trust you feel the fact that they're going to they're going to.

Yes and everything you say and it's going to be wonderful and you're gonna yes and them and you're going to go places.

Improv really is so many areas of personal growth in the sense that it really does help foster this idea of openness in the yes and how can I make my partner look good and how can I really not care what other people are thinking.

Because when you're not used to it and I'm sure even Kelly all the years of practice and an experience you have you still get this of the you know oh my god I really put myself out there there is no script. I just have to. It just has to go of course and it's not.

I mean sometimes you don't get it. You don't get yes and sometimes you will get blocked sometimes things won't work out on stage and it might not be malicious.

It might be because someone misheard her because or because something just didn't click or you're just not right that night or the stars are not aligned it's it's it's improv. Anything can happen. You

can have a fantastic show or a terrible show or a mediocre show.

There is no script at all still accepting that and being being okay with that I think is really important. The idea of not being afraid is also related to not being afraid of failure. The fact that you will make mistakes and that's another form of acceptance as well.

That is another attitude that improvisers have to have in order to do what we do. And these are I think really important life skills and they help us become more self-aware more reflective more considerate more empathetic I think.

Yes and I love this idea of quote unquote mistakes because I always tell people that there's really no there are no mistakes in life there's no failure it's all just feedback right. Yeah and you talked about this once an improv class how you make a quote unquote mistake on how do you use that mistake to your advantage.

How can you make it funny. You offered an example of how you kind of made it funny where you were. Do you remember the example you were in a room and you know you were driving a car right and you were doing.

Yeah.

My partner Bart, so Bart who I perform in the book ends with. We weren't we restarted a scene where my character was in a car and he was at a gas station and what we do is we turns actually doing a scene and then narrating to the audience as if we are the author of the book because we.

We take a book I should have mentioned this as our starting point. So we take a sentence from a book that is our starting point and then the rest goes from there. Every so often we will say something as if we are the narrator and then we'll go back into our scene work.

So I don't know why but I cross my legs in the car. I was trying as I pulled up to the gas station and of course Bart picked up on it. You said that in his in the reader voice said that he noticed that she was that the car was so big she was able to cross her legs and immediately that bag gave them that

. But he he made something lovely out of the mistake. I read that then gave us something that inspired my character's backstory. And why do I have a big car and how do we. Everything else basically went from there.

So that's beautiful. I love that. And it's just charming. You know like it's endearing and as an audience member I just I want to learn more.

Right. Because if you if they if the audience sees that you are good naturedly failing or you're good naturedly accepting each other's ideas and working together to create a story you're taking them with you. If they see that you're not listening to each other you're not playing together they'll feel it will build. They'll see that something's not working so true.

And that's the same in any sort of thing that you're trying to create.

If you are creating from a place of authenticity from a place of love and passion and being in servitude to others and you're really directing it towards your ideal people the people that you're here to serve or that you want to entertain or create for or help there really is no such thing as making mistake because even if you do fumble the classical sense your people are going to love it and they're going to love you for it and finding endearing and so that's and your mistake.

Exactly and it's so that just takes a layer of fear off of you because you know there is no mistake. So Kelly I'm so excited to continue on with your classes because they are just their damn fun. It's just it's an amazing learning of life skills confidence being centered trusting your gut. Yes and you making your partner look good. These are all amazing life skills.

Tell us for the people who live in Brussels and for people who live around the world how can they find you can find this online at w w w dot improbable dot com and on Facebook with improbable. We have a mailing list that you can subscribe to.

We have shows every month. We have new classes starting every few months. We currently have two levels but we're going to add another beginners class very soon. So get in touch and tell us what you'd like to do and get some improvement to your life.

I am an improved student and I really can't recommend it enough. If you live in Brussels do it like don't think twice if you don't live in Brussels check out the improv scene in your community.

Yes there are classes I'm sure there are shows all all over all over it's wonderful it's sprouting up all over the globe.

So just google your city and the word improv and go just go to it and I have to say I have so many of my clients who come to me and one of the first things that they say especially as entrepreneurs. It does require so much competence so many of my clients come to me and say I lack competence. How can I build my confidence. How low this is a great way to build confidence.

Oh and Ellis of building on that. Yes. And I think that that is particularly true for women.

One other area that I'm really passionate about is empowering women through improvisation exactly because it does so much for their confidence. So I think that if you're a woman especially a woman who's who feels a little bit unsure of herself. This is incredibly good. And is an incredibly good thing for you.

Beautiful. Couldn't agree more. So Kelly and I's challenge for all the people listening is to one just tweak your language is more than just language. It is a mindset. Yes but to yes and and check out the improv from Brussels.

Check Kelly out Kelly travels all over the world. So she's coming to a town near you. People look

out or check out your local impromptu scene. Kelly thank you so much for chatting with us today. You are such an inspiration. I refer to you as a dynamo. Oh my goodness.

Oh thank you so much Alison. I'm I'm so happy to have you in my class and some of you might not know this but I've I also know Alison as a life coach that's how we first met because this was all just an idea in my head and I just didn't know where to get started I turned to to you for help so I have you to think as well.

Thank you very much.

You're so welcome. It's joy for me to be play a small part of your journey. Thank you so much. Thank you.

And thank you dear listener for listening. And please don't forget to subscribe to this podcast and give it a rating and review. And till next time stay uncorked. Bye.

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